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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 001757

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STATE FOR S/CT,NEA/ARP
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SUBJECT: AMIRI DIWAN MINISTER ON GOVERNMENT-PARLIAMENT
RELATIONS AND CEIP

REF: KUWAIT 1718

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, Alan G. Misenheimer, for Reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: CDA met with Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs and eldest son of the Amir, Shaykh Nasser Al Sabah, on December 11 and discussed a range of issues including Kuwait's participation and contribution at the Paris Donor Conference (Ref. A), Kuwaiti domestic politics and Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection (CEIP). In terms of internal political dynamics, Shaykh Nasser told CDA repeatedly that the political situation in Kuwait is "very healthy". END SUMMARY.

THE MOST STABLE COUNTRY IN THE GULF

12. (C) CDA asked Shaykh Nasser about his views on the current tensions between the government and the National Assembly. According to the Minister, the domestic situation in Kuwait is "very healthy" and democracy is working as it should by forcing compromise between differing factions, namely the government and the various political trends in the National Assembly. Shaykh Nasser dismissed the rumors of a pending Amiri decision to dissolve the National Assembly. He emphasized that the Amir believes strongly in both the Constitution and democracy and clarified that if the Amir were to take any action to dissolve parliament it would be constitutional (NOTE: If the Amir were to dissolve the National Assembly, per the Constitution, elections must be held within 60 days. END NOTE). Shaykh Nasser said he hoped that this National Assembly would finish out its term, which ends in 2010. However, he stressed that if the Amir did dissolve Parliament, then the MPs selected through elections under the new electoral system, would perhaps be better equipped to deal with the needs of Kuwait (NOTE: Kuwait changed the number of electoral constituencies from 25 to five in July 2006 END NOTE).

13. (C) Shaykh Nasser noted that much of the criticism previously directed at the government has now shifted towards the National Assembly. He lauded the free nature of the press in Kuwait and said that media attention was putting pressure on MPs to become more responsible in their actions. Shaykh Nasser added that the people of Kuwait need to get their MPs in line. He added that "Kuwait is the most stable country in the Gulf" and that current internal dynamics will have no impact on the bilateral Kuwait-US relationship. (COMMENT: The political situation is not as rosy as portrayed by Shaykh Nasser. Other informed sources suggest that the Amir remains "fed up" with the political climate and may now

view the impending Eid holiday (December 14-22) as the threshold for a further discussion on constitutional dissolution of Parliament. END COMMENT)

NO IDEA WHO WILL TAKE LEAD ON CEIP

14. (C) CDA briefed the Minister on USG efforts to provide support to enhance protection of Kuwait's critical infrastructure. CDA specifically raised the CEIP draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USG and Kuwait, stressing the need for a decision on which GOK entity will take the lead and sign the MOU. The Minister said that he was unaware of CEIP issues but would seek to educate himself. He gave no indication as to who would be the lead on the GOK side.

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